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A sound-equipped ball that blind children can catch, bat and use to play baseball was presented today to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

The ball, which makes a pulsating beeping noise, is called the Pioneer Audio Ball in honor of the Telephone Pioneers of America, whose members have made and donated more than 1,200 of them to individuals and schools and other institutions for the blind.

Also presented to the Hall of Fame today was equipment and other material associated with a baseball game for the sightless which employs the audio ball and sound-emitting bases. The game, developed by Telephone Pioneers, is being played by blind children in a number of cities.

The Telephone Pioneer organization is made up of more than 360,000 active and retired employees with 21 or more years of service in the telephone industry in the U.S. and Canada. Its members participate in a variety of projects to help the handicapped.

Paul S. Kerr, president of the Hall of Fame, commented:

"I am more than happy to accept this display. It will be a wonderful addition to our collection of mementoes depicting the history and progress of baseball in America."

The presentation was made by Richard R. Hough, president of the Telephone Pioneers of America and an executive of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Hough, reading from an inscription, said: "To feel the excitement and see the expression on the face of a blind boy when he has hit a baseball for the first time is to witness the greatest experience of a lifetime."

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The audio ball is a regulation-size softball with a plug-in sound module. Before the module is inserted, the ball is partly unstitched and a hole drilled into it. The mechanism is then fastened into place and the stitches resewn. Powered by nickel cadmium batteries, the sound is triggered by removing a pin which acts as an on-off switch.

Most of the balls are being produced in North Andover, Mass., by a group of retired employees of the Western Electric Company who devote one morning a week to the project. A similar volunteer assembly line was recently set up in San Francisco.

The game, called Beep Baseball for the Sightless, was designed to be played outdoors or in a large indoor gymnasium. Bases equipped with speaker systems are situated in a semi-circle behind the batter's box. A sighted assistant operates the sound from a control panel or by flicking a switch on the cone-shaped bases. Three other sighted persons are used to assist the players.

When the batter hits the audio ball he walks toward the base emitting a sound as the players on the opposing team field the ball. A run is scored if he reaches base before the ball is caught. All players wear protective gear to prevent injury.

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